

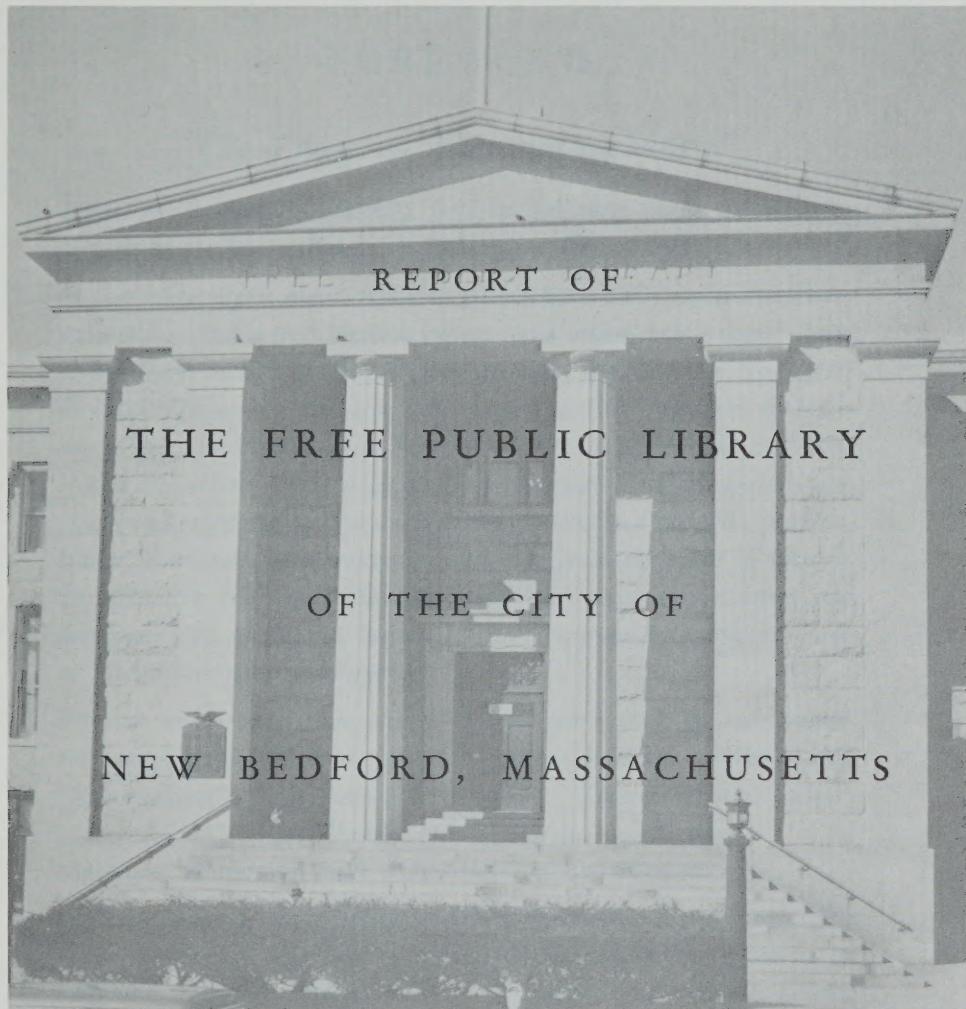
FEBRUARY, 1961

FEBRUARY, 1966

FIVE YEARS

THE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
OF THE CITY OF  
NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS





FEBRUARY 1, 1961

TO

FEBRUARY 1, 1966

REYNOLDS DEWALT PRINTING, INC.

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

1966

## FOREWORD

*“The Times — They are a-changin”*

*These words from a recently popular folksong paint an accurate picture of the years, February 1961 — February 1966.*

*In these five years, great men and events have come upon the scene; some have passed into history; others have taken their places. John F. Kennedy, inaugurated in January of 1961, shot down in November of 1963; Lyndon B. Johnson, inaugurated as Vice-President in January, 1961; as President in November, 1963 and elected in 1964; Nikita Kruschev, once a symbol of dictatorial staying-power, deposed and relegated to a place in history; Winston Churchill, prophet, leader, statesman, and author moved quietly to his place in history. In these five years, mankind has lived with tension, pressures, and sorrows. Yet, amidst the hurts and sorrows, man has achieved some of his greater accomplishments.*

*Phrases and words from the past five years stick in our minds, for we Americans are a nation of phrase makers. “Viet-Nam”, “Space Race”, “Population Explosion”, “Cuban Missile Crisis”, “Civil Rights” — as Hamlet said, “Words, words, words.” Yet, these and all the rest have deep meanings for all of us.*

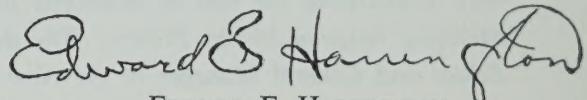
*In New Bedford, we experienced all of these events and more. We have experienced the loss of leadership of people like Carolyn B. Manning, longtime library Trustee. The death of Charles J. Lewin, Editor and General Manager of the New Bedford Standard-Times was a blow to the entire community as well as to the Library, whose work he supported. The phrases in New Bedford were “Urban Renewal”, “Hurricane Dike”, “ONBOARD”.*

*The Free Public Library is a part of that change and as a living entity within the cultural — social — educational framework, reflects that change. Some of the changes are set down here.*

*In a democratic society, education is the cornerstone of the present and the future; the public library is as much a part of that cornerstone as is the school system. Providing for the educational, social, recreational and cultural needs of our citizens, the library opens its doors to the old, and the young, the rich and the poor, the famous and the unknown. Through its collections, our people are in touch with the past, cognizant of the present and abreast of the future.*

*Working with an excellent group of dedicated Trustees, Mr. Healey our fine librarian, and a conscientious and capable staff in the formation, maintenance and expansion of our library activities has been a source of great personal satisfaction to me. It has been a challenge that has been met and will continue to be met with every resource at our command. Our people shall continue to have every benefit that we can provide.*

*Thus, as Chairman, ex officio of the Board of Library Trustees, I welcome this report and, in turn submit it to you, our citizens, for your examination and information. We hope that it meets with your approval, so we may go on with the work of ever-improving "The Peoples University".*



EDWARD F. HARRINGTON,  
Mayor

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
PROJECT HERITAGE . . . . .	7
THE MELVILLE WHALING ROOM . . . . .	7
RESTORATION OF THE ART COLLECTION . . . . .	10
NEW BEDFORD COLLECTION . . . . .	11
THE COLLECTION . . . . .	11
RECORD COLLECTION . . . . .	15
MICROFILMS . . . . .	15
PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS . . . . .	15
PROCEDURES . . . . .	18
WAR ON POVERTY . . . . .	22
MUSEUM ACTIVITIES . . . . .	22
OTHER LIBRARY ACTIVITIES . . . . .	23
THE BOOK FAIRS . . . . .	23
EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARY . . . . .	23
LECTURE SERIES . . . . .	24
NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK . . . . .	24
LIBRARIAN'S ACTIVITIES . . . . .	25
THE REFERENCE DEPARTMENT . . . . .	25
GENEALOGICAL DEPARTMENT . . . . .	26
EXTENSION FACILITIES . . . . .	26
SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE . . . . .	28
CATALOG DEPARTMENT . . . . .	29
PERSONNEL . . . . .	29
STAFF OF THE LIBRARY . . . . .	31
A WORD OF THANKS . . . . .	32
APPENDICES . . . . .	33

To the Board of Library Trustees  
of the Free Public Library  
New Bedford, Massachusetts

HONORABLE EDWARD F. HARRINGTON, *Mayor, Chairman ex-officio*

MR. RICHARD F. BAILEY

ATTORNEY H. ERNEST DIONNE

MRS. PHILIP A. BARNET

MRS. RICHARD HODGE

MRS. BASIL BREWER

PROF. CELESTINO D. MACEDO

MRS. JOHN M. BULLARD

MRS. GEORGE A. MELLO

JAMES M. QUINN, M. D.

I respectfully submit this report of the five years, February 1, 1961 — February 1, 1966, to you, and through you, to the people of the City of New Bedford.

JAMES S. HEALEY,  
Librarian

## PROJECT HERITAGE

Project Heritage was conceived to maintain the City's great past, so that it might serve as an inspiration to the future. Three separate and distinct areas indicated a great need for preservation. They were: 1. The establishment and developing of the Melville Whaling Room; 2. The restoration of the art collection; 3. The development of the collection of New Bedford Imprints and as part of this last area the restoration of the Elizabeth Rotch Rodman House.

### *The Melville Whaling Room:*

There is no need for great detail about the opening of the Melville Whaling Room. That beginning has been well reported in the local and national press. It is more fitting in this report to outline what progress the collection has made since April 14, 1962. One of the most important developments has been the growth of the collection. The 1960 edition of *Subject Collection of American Libraries* lists the Free Public Library as holding 2,000 items dealing with whaling. In April of 1962, the Room boasted a collection of 20,000 items. Since that time, a great many gifts of various types have been received. Logbooks, account books, letters, and other types of documents have been added, mostly through the generosity of a great many persons. In addition, several persons have allowed the Library to microfilm their materials for use in the Library. The Library has microfilmed the crew lists of the New Bedford Port Society. Continuing the acquisition program, we purchased crew lists held in the National Archives in Washington, D.C., on microfilm. Finally, with the aid of several men who were among the last to go whaling, the Library has conducted a small, but important, oral history program. This project is designed to record the memories of the men who took part in the industry that played such an important role in our nation's history. It is hoped that the growth of the Melville Whaling Room will continue to make it the outstanding research center of American Whaling. Realizing its importance as a research center, the Melville Room embarked on a public information program. Utilizing the major news media — newspapers, radio, and television — an endeavor to broaden both the community's and the area's awareness of its whaling heritage was made. The Melville Room, as was the Library as a whole, was particularly fortunate to have had the great cooperation of the *New Bedford Standard-Times* in its coverage of the Library's activities. Mr. Hegarty, Whaling Curator, in two early 1964 radio programs on Station WBSM created a great deal of interest on the part of the man in the street. Station WHDH-TV, Channel 5 in Boston, produced seven television shows. Filmed for the "Captain Bob" children's show, they ap-



MAYOR EDWARD F. HARRINGTON USES A WELL HONED CUTTING SPADE TO CUT THE "RIBBON," A PIECE OF LINE USED ABOARD A NEW BEDFORD WHALER, TO OFFICIALLY OPEN THE MELVILLE WHALING ROOM, APRIL 14, 1962.



VIEW OF THE MELVILLE WHALING ROOM, SHOWING SOME OF THE PAINTINGS, MODELS AND PART OF THE MORE THAN 67,000 ITEMS OF THE COLLECTION.

peared in 1963. Added to that was a program produced over the NBC television network by "Captain Bob" that appeared nationally on 139 stations, including Hawaii and Alaska, that featured Mr. Hegarty. In 1963, the producers of "Dateline Boston" of Channel 5, WHDH-TV invited the Library to do a series of adult programs on whaling. The results were seen on six 25-minute shows running in March and April of 1964. In 1965, the shows were expanded to 30 minutes, and the six program series was repeated in the spring. In response to an offer of a booklet on whaling made during one of the programs, more than seven hundred requests were received and filled. With these endeavors and more that are being prepared, the Melville Room will continue to keep its name and the name of New Bedford before the public.

#### *Research facilities*

The Melville Room's most important function is as a research center. It was for this purpose that the room was organized. The Room has received inquiries from all over the United States, from Europe, Canada, and as far away as Australia. Many students have used the materials for purposes ranging from term papers to doctoral dissertations. Scholars in the field of history, economics and sociology have come to New Bedford because this is the one place where they can get the information they need.

To further illustrate the Melville Room's importance, as well as that of Mr. Hegarty the Curator, are the several recently published books which list both as prime sources of research.

As the materials are indexed and more details emerge from the materials, the scholarly use of the Room will grow. Aiding use will be publications, such as the *List of Log books in the Melville Whaling Room* published by the Library in 1963. In 1965, with the influx of a number of people from New Bedford's OEO office, "ONBOARD", Mr. Hegarty was able to have more than 2,000,000 pieces of information indexed from the crew lists the library owns. When completed the more than 200,000 cards will list the names and salient informational points on all the men who sailed from the New Bedford Custom's District. Another aspect of the Melville Room's importance was shown with the receipt of a grant from the Kendall Foundation to publish Reginald Hegarty's *Addendum to "Starbuck" and "Whaling Masters"*, 1964. This completed Mr. Hegarty's earlier work, *Return of Whaling Vessels Sailing from American Ports*, published in 1959. Also in 1964, Mr. Hegarty published his fine work *Birth of a Whaleship*. Unique in its field, *Birth of a Whaleship* is an exact, and detailed text on the building of a whaleship.



FORMER GOVERNOR AND MRS. ENDICOTT PEABODY JOIN MAYOR AND MRS. EDWARD F. HARRINGTON AT THE SECOND ANNUAL RESTORATION BALL, SEPTEMBER, 1964.

Illustrated by the well-known artist Milton Delano of Fairhaven, Massachusetts, *Birth of a Whaleship* received a number of excellent reviews from such diverse publications as the *San Francisco Chronicle* as well as the *Proceedings of the Naval Institute*. Mr. Hegarty turned all receipts of the sale of the book to the Melville Room in an act of true generosity. The book also received a Commendation from the American Association of State and Local History for its excellence.

One final note, although not directly connected with the Library, is worthy of mention. It was during 1965, that Mr. Hegarty had his children's book *The Rope's End* published by the Houghton, Mifflin Company. That work was listed as one of the 75 Best Children's Books of the year, by the *New York Times*.

### *Restoration of the Art Collection*

The restoration of the art collection has been a most important part of Project Heritage. The collection, including the Audubon prints, is valued in excess of two hundred thousand dollars. In 1962, Mr. S. Morton Vose of the Vose Galleries of Boston was appointed to survey the collection.

His findings, in addition to the valuation placed on the collection, showed a major restoration project was needed. While such a project was needed, funds were not available. Thanks to a most resourceful trustee, Mrs. George A. Mello, it was decided that a formal ball might be a good way to raise the funds. The Trustees gave their approval and the Restoration Ball Committee of New Bedford was formed. In October of 1963, the first annual Restoration Ball was held at the New Bedford Hotel. Thanks to the interest of the community, the Ball was a great social success and a financial one as well, netting in excess of \$3,600.00.

Restoration of the art collection began immediately but it was obvious that more funds were needed. Since a tradition had been started, it was natural to hold a second Restoration Ball. Late in September, 1964, the second Ball was held; the social success was repeated and the Committee netted more than \$2,000.00 for the restoration of the art collection. Early in 1966, the paintings and a carving were presented. An interim opening, coming after the first group of paintings was restored, was highlighted by a lecture by Mr. Bartlett Hayes, Director of the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover.

### *New Bedford Collection*

The final part of Project Heritage is the establishment of the New Bedford Collection. This collection will trace New Bedford's history through printed materials. Such a collection will consist of all types of printed materials — company catalogs, play bills, sermons and various other printed documents. Late in the spring of 1965, the Library received a gift of \$50,000.00 for the purchase of the Elizabeth Rotch Rodman House on North Second Street. This house, one of the fine examples of early nineteenth century New Bedford architecture, is to be restored as a library — cum — period restoration. The Genealogical Collection as well as the New Bedford imprint collection from the Library will be located in the House putting these materials in a most proper setting.

## THE COLLECTION

The basic part of any library is its book collection. New Bedford's problem in this area has been severe. The collection showed a number of serious gaps. As the educational growth of a community moves forward, so must the Library reflect that growth. Stagnation and disintergration were the words that best described the collection. A clean-up was indicated. We surveyed the situation quite thoroughly. As our survey progressed, it was obvious that we had no choice in the matter — a massive weeding and discarding program was imperative. In May of 1961, the



"BIRTH OF WHALING," BY WILLIAM A. WALL.



"SUNSET LIGHT," BY ALBERT BIERSTADT.

TWO OF THE MAGNIFICENT PAINTINGS IN THE LIBRARY'S RESTORED COLLECTION.



PICTURE OF VARIETY — SOME OF THE MATERIALS AVAILABLE AT THE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY. BOOKS, OF ALL KINDS, NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, MICROFILMS, PAMPHLETS, RECORDS.

program was instituted. Before completed, two years would pass. But on that sunny May Monday, we started the job. In the six days the Library was closed, we discarded over sixteen tons of waste material. This included long runs of unused, and unusable periodical sets. Thousands of pounds of unbound magazines made up another part of this discard total. The stack area was gone over completely, each book, pamphlet and periodical was put into its proper place on the shelf. When the time was up, the Library had taken its first major step in the cleaning process. From this time into late June of 1963, each stack level, each section of the collection was examined. It is difficult to describe the state of the materials in the Library. In so many areas it was found that the Library's latest materials were 30, 40 even 60 years old. Whole sections of books were removed from the shelves. The more we checked our materials against the standard guides, the more we found our collection lacked in adequate and authoritative research materials. Finally, the job was done. In the last two weeks in June, 1963, the last (hopefully) full inventory was taken. Added to the more than 40,000 useless items discarded was the figure of 12,000 pieces that had been lost, stolen or somehow strayed from the library. A further weeding of the fiction was undertaken. This discarding program resulted in a loss of 25,000 items of utterly useless materials. Losing nearly 80,000 items over such a short term was a serious matter. But as the useless items began to leave, steps were taken to rebuild and renew. The Board of Trustees earmarked a special trust fund of \$25,000



A VIEW OF THE REFERENCE ROOM BEFORE RENOVATION.



SAME ROOM, AFTER.

for the collection rebuilding program, in addition to other regular library acquisitions. The main point of all of this work was to establish the Library's collection as southeastern Massachusetts' chief research collection. Being the largest library in the area, we feel that such an undertaking is our responsibility. While such a task will never be finished, we are well on our way.

### *Record Collections*

One of our more popular services, the record collection, has had an ever increasing use. By expanding the Central Library's collection to over 2,000 albums, the public has found almost every type of recorded material. Classical, semi-classical, popular, jazz and show tunes make up the great bulk of the collection. These are augmented by "spoken" records — poetry, plays, bridge and shorthand lessons and so on. The Branches also have in circulation collections, established in 1964.

### *Microforms*

In this exciting area of library materials, New Bedford has kept pace. In addition to the *Saturday Review* on micro-cards, we are receiving copies of the U. S. Patent Office Gazette in the same form. Some little used but important periodical sets have been included in this line. We are gradually moving into a heavier concentration on the acquisition of these materials for their obvious advantage — a wealth of material in compact form. In the more usual form of micro-film, the Library has been microfilming the *New Bedford Standard-Times* for many years. Also, we recently completed the microfilming of the New Bedford City Documents. This was a most important task because we have found that many copies were missing. By microfilming the documents we will retain a permanent record of New Bedford's municipal advances.

## **PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS**

While we have been busy working to improve our service-collection aspects, we have also been engaged in a massive program of building — new and restorative. Since 1961, major renovations have come in quick profusion. In 1961, new flooring was laid in both the Reference Room and Ingraham Hall. In 1962, the Library's plumbing was completely renovated, including new piping and fixtures. In March of 1963, the elevator was converted to a self-service type machine. This conversion completed years of preparation and thinking.

In the same month of March, the Trustees were presented with a detailed plan of what needed to be done. Seeing the problems, they were quick to



A VIEW OF INGRAHAM HALL, THE GENERAL READING ROOM, BEFORE RENOVATIONS.



SAME ROOM, AFTER.

begin. Since the report was presented, we have had 33 broken floor panes replaced in the stack area; we have completely cleaned our lighting system, and set up a bulb replacement system; several broken windows were replaced, as well as the window shades in Ingraham Hall and the Reference Room. The hot air duct system was cleaned, thus removing a very serious heating problem. By the end of 1963, the radiator system in the Main Library, after more than fifty years of hard work, collapsed. As a result, the Board authorized an immediate replacing of radiators. The new fin type pipes installed have already made a very measurable difference in the warmth of the building. In 1965, the major part of the Central Library renovation was completed. New shelving, and furnishings were installed in the Reference Room and Ingraham Hall. The Reference Room's book capacity was increased from 1400 volumes to 4500 volumes, while seating was increased from 48 to 64 seats. The shelving in Ingraham Hall increased capacity in that room from 4000 volumes to 9,000, and comfortable and attractive tables and chairs were provided for our patrons. The increase in the book shelving helped provide space for many materials that were formerly in the Art Room as well as the Business-Technical Department.

The two named departments were closed in a move designed to make the materials more available to the public. In addition, the amount of circulation done by the two departments was so small as to make the staffing of the rooms very expensive both in staff time and technical processes.

The offices of the Librarian and Assistant Librarian were moved to the top floor to make room for a newspaper room and a reference office in the main rotunda area. New locks were installed on all doors. The entire interior of the Central Library was repainted. The folding doors in the Lawler Branch Library auditorium were repaired, making that room doubly useful. Furnishings and shelving were set up in what will become a Young Adult Department on the ground floor. Further, the Catalog Room, was moved to the top floor, provided with new shelving and arranged for faster processing. Also installed were aluminum and glass doors in the ground floor corridor to make it possible for one person to control both the Children's Room and the Young Adult Room.

In the Lecture Hall, and top floor corridor, special lights were installed to make viewing of the art collection more of a pleasure than an eye squinting task. A stereophonic music installation was set up in the Lecture Hall.

Under the direction of Architect Owen F. Hackett, Jr. new bronze and glass doors were installed to replace the badly worn doors that had been installed in 1907. The large bronze doors that face Pleasant Street remain since they are in comparatively good condition.

The Central Library, by the end of 1965, had undergone a substantial face lifting.

In January of 1963, Mayor Harrington discussed the possibility of a replacement for the old Harriman Branch Library. The Trustees instructed the Librarian to locate a suitable site. Carrying out that duty, the Librarian recommended the corner of Rodney French Boulevard and Cove Street, two blocks from the old branch's location. Subsequently, the firm of Bishop and Hackett was appointed to draw up plans and specifications. After extensive planning and work, the Howland-Green Branch Library opened in May, 1964.

The building, which cost approximately \$375,000.00 completely furnished, became the center of controversy from its inception. Called "The Bat" by some, "The South End Railroad Station" by others, the unique design was far from the colonial building that many hoped to see. Yet, the Howland-Green Branch is one of the most outstanding building designs in Southeastern Massachusetts. While many looked with amazement at the building, many more came to be charmed by the pleasant interior. In the Summer of 1965, the Brazilian Ambassador to the United States toured New Bedford. He happened to pass the Branch, and, though it was not on his itinerary, he made a point of touring the building. Before leaving the City, he expressed a desire to build a replica of the Branch as a memorial to his son in Bahia, Brazil. Mayor Harrington journeyed to Washington and presented the plans and specifications to Mr. Magalhaes, who was leaving to become Minister of Justice in Brazil.

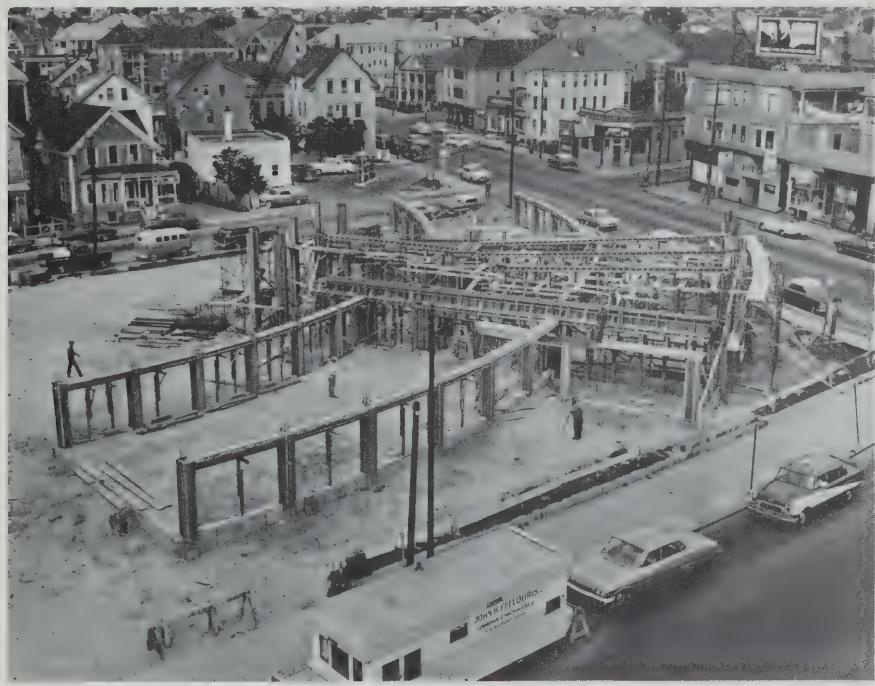
## PROCEDURES

To properly serve the people, a library staff must be properly organized. Each department is being studied to determine more efficient and less tiresome methods and operations. Two Central Library departments have been studied in this manner. The Circulation and the Catalog Department were the first to be surveyed. In August of 1961, the Gaylord system of book charging was installed. Later, the circulation period of library materials was changed to a four-week loan period with no renewals.

In August of 1965, the Free Public Library was the first public library in New England to automate its services. The planning of this installation had begun 18 months previous to the actual pressing of the first button. The reasons for the move into automation were many. First, the amount of record keeping in the areas of circulation, patron registration and overdue preparation had reached fantastic financial levels. One member of the staff spent three of her five days in the Library preparing overdue notices for recalcitrant patrons. The worst part of such an operation is



OLD LANDMARK COMING DOWN. THE WASHINGTON CLUB DURING DEMOLITION.



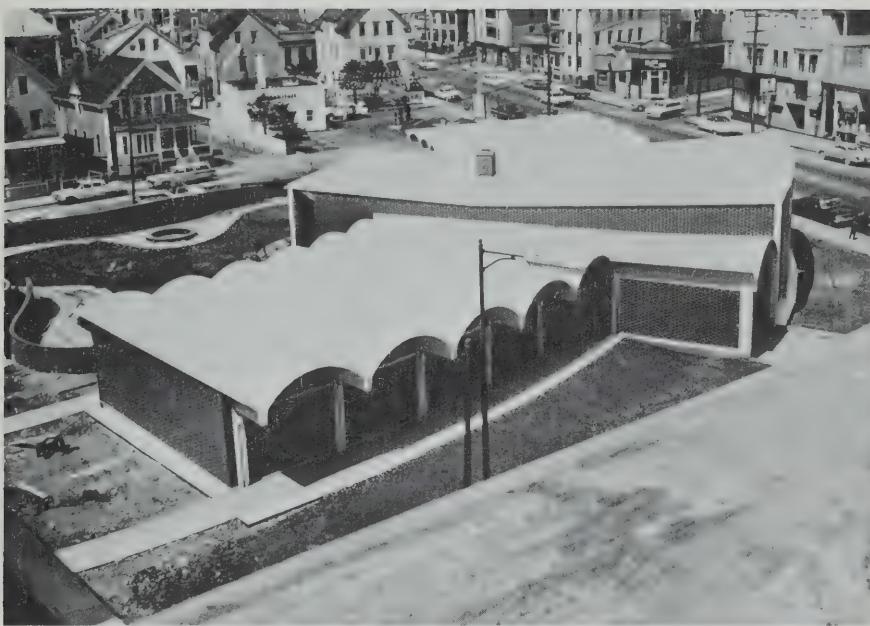
NEW LANDMARK GOING UP.

that it took experienced library staff away from helping members of the public. And since the Library's main purpose for existing is to assist those who come into the building, we had to find a way to spend more time with the public. Thus, automation.

The first task undertaken was to get all fiction titles "on" to the automated circulation system. That done, we began key-punching the non-fiction items that had been published since 1960. This is a time consuming task but it must be done. Only after the cards are punched can we put the books in circulation under the automated system. At the same time, the new books coming into the Library are also being put into circulation through the new system. The more items "on" the automated system, the easier circulation becomes for the staff as a whole.

Concurrent with the above was the patron registration program. This was done so that our records would be, in the jargon of the automation trade, in "machine readable form". The overdues were produced and sent out, and our "claimed returned file" — a list of materials our patrons say they have returned but for which we have no record of such return — diminished to a fair extent. This led some of us at the Library to wondering about the fact that some humans seem to believe machines more than they do other humans. A major alteration in our service came in the change from a public card catalog to a book format public catalog. The book catalog, rather than being a major technological change, is a very old fashioned library idea. From the earliest days of the Social Library in this country, up into the first years of the Twentieth Century, the book catalog was the only thing used in libraries. Card catalogs came into being when the task and cost of updating the book catalogs became impossible to bear. By the second decade of the Twentieth Century, meetings of the American Library Association had dealt with that new and radical piece of equipment — the typewriter. Now that automation has made the repetitious moves easy, libraries all over the nation are turning back to the book catalog. The two most important service reasons are: 1. The ability for all library facilities, central library departments, branches, bookmobiles and stations to have a comprehensive view of all of the Library's holdings; 2. The ability of the interested reader to be able to take the catalog home with him and use it at his leisure to find what he wants.

In the business end of the library's operation, we have been turning out the Library's payroll and checks on the machines. In the next six months, we expect to have all of our acquisitions and most of our processing done by machines. Further, serials control is another step we will be taking. Finally, we hope to put our accounts payable onto the machines to give ourselves closer budgetary control.



NEAR COMPLETION, THE STARK WHITE OF THE BUILDING'S ROOF DISPLAYING THE BARREL-VAULT CONSTRUCTION OF THE YOUNG ADULT - CHILDREN'S WING, AND THE CENTRAL CORE.



INTERIOR VIEW OF THE ADULT WING. TABLES AND CHAIRS AT LOWER LEFT ARE LISTENING TABLES WITH STEREO EAR-PHONES.

## WAR ON POVERTY

One of the Library's more interesting projects was its experiment with the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and the other aspects on the War on Poverty. The first year's work with the NYC was documented in an article by the Librarian in the *Wilson Library Bulletin*; the article is appended to this report. The project continued. In the 1965-66 season, forty-five youngsters were employed in the various library facilities. They were put to work in the Melville Room, the Stacks, the branches and in the Janitorial Department. The girls in the Melville Room continued their indexing of the names of the thousands of whalers that sailed from New Bedford. In addition to the indexing, others were typing and filing the finished cards. The boys in the Janitorial Department were kept busy keeping the Central Library clean and neat. The girls in the stacks and branches kept materials in place. Of particular import was that the Library hired a young woman from the Youth Corps as a full time staff member. Thus, while the Youth Corps people served to help the Library, we were helped even more by being able to hire a trained person onto the staff.

In other activities, the Library served as the supplier of materials and training for two Neighborhood Center Libraries set up by the local poverty office, known here as ONBOARD. Further, the meetings of the Small Business group were held in the Library.

On balance, the Library has taken an active part in the War on Poverty in New Bedford. And in return, the Library has found an excellent source of helpful hands in the persons of the NYC.

## MUSEUM ACTIVITIES

In the past few years, the Library has worked closely with both the Old Dartmouth Historical Society and the Crapo Gallery of the Swain School in hanging several exhibits. Early in 1961, several whaling prints were loaned to the Old Dartmouth for an exhibit. Also, the Library has been a regular contributor to exhibitions at the Crapo Gallery. Through that organization's good offices, the Library hung a large show of the Audubon prints. In addition, this show gave us a public forum from which we could explain our stand on the detaching of the Audubon plates, a stand that had caused nationwide controversy. In two other shows at the Crapo Gallery, the Library contributed a painting. One of those hung was Wall's "Birth of Whaling" and the other was the primitive whaling scene that has become so well known. The library acted not only as a contributor to exhibits, it also took a role as an active collector. In November, 1961, two William Bradford paintings were purchased from

a Washington, D. C., dealer. The dealer had called the Library, offering the two paintings to the Library at a very low figure because, as he said, "I felt they should come home." The Trustees wisely invested some funds, and the paintings are now a proud part of our collection. Another pleasant surprise occurred when Mr. and Mrs. J. Alfred DesChesnes offered a Clement Nye Swift painting to the Library. Titled "A Scene in Britany", the painting is another fine example of Swift's work, and the Library was most pleased to receive it. Late in 1965, Mr. and Mrs. Eliot S. Knowles presented the Library with a magnificently carved bench by Leander Plummer. The bench made an excellent companion piece to a carving by Plummer that had been given to the Library many years before. In addition, the Library sponsored several shows by New Bedford painters such as Melvin Zabarsky, Ronald Kowalke and Mrs. Irwin Jaslow, as well as the first exhibition by the New Bedford Association of Artists and Craftsmen.

Finally, as we were searching through the file in the Art Room, we came upon sixteen original Currier and Ives Prints. Subsequently, we had them matted and they now grace the office of the Mayor in the Municipal Building adding a lovely note to those austere surroundings.

## OTHER LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

### *The Book Fairs*

In the summers of 1961 and 1962, the Library held its "Book Fairs." As we moved through the collection, we found hundreds of volumes that were of no use to the Library. On the other hand, they were in fair condition. Being quite partial to books, we felt that giving them up for junk was a terrible waste. With the consent of the Trustees, and the City Council, the Library held its book fairs. In 1961, over 2,000 volumes were sold in the space of 45 minutes. In 1962, five thousand volumes were sold in a week. The funds realized were turned over to the City, and from the two fairs a great deal of good was achieved.

### *Eastern Regional Library*

For the past five years, the Library has been privileged to be part of the new Eastern Regional Library System. This system will offer excellent library service to the entire eastern third of the State by making available the collections of the Boston Public Library, telephone reference service, and many others. Such a regional system will complete the Commonwealth's move into regional library service. Most importantly, the people of New Bedford, like the other 3,700,000 in the Eastern region, will be able to take advantage of a whole new dimension of library service.

## *Lecture Series:*

In the 1961-62 season as well as the '62-'63 season, the library presented several speakers, on many topics. Included in the series were Professors James Burns and C. James Cleary of Stonehill College, Mr. Earl J. Dias and the Harrie Johnston musical group. The following season featured Mr. Everett Allen of the *New Bedford Standard Times* and Mr. Paul G. O'Friel, General Manager of Radio Station WBZ.

## *National Library Week*

Since National Library Week was designed to focus special attention on the nation's libraries, we have attempted to maintain this week as a very special time. In 1961, the Trustees very gracefully tendered the new librarian and his wife a reception at the Library. During the week that followed, two important American authors appeared in New Bedford. Professor Edward Wagenknecht, author of several studies of American authors and collections of various literary forms spoke at a luncheon at the New Bedford Hotel. In the same week, Vance Packard, author of the "Status Seekers", "Hidden Persuaders", and several other best selling studies of the American scene spoke to a large audience at the New Bedford High School.

National Library Week in 1962 was Whaling Week in New Bedford. Beginning on Monday of that week, Everett Allen spoke at the Library on the topic "Whalemen I Have Known". Tuesday night, Reginald B. Hegarty spoke, tracing a whaling voyage for another large audience. Thursday, at Keith Junior High School, Edouard Stackpole, Curator of Mystic Seaport, detailed the historical importance of whaling. On Saturday, April 14, the Melville Whaling Room opened. At the ceremony marking the opening, Mayor Harrington was the principal speaker. We were pleased to have with us the Very Reverend James J. Gerard, Auxiliary Bishop of Fall River, and Mr. Philip Purrington, Curator of the Old Dartmouth Historical Museum. Guests from many parts of New England enjoyed the whaling ballads performed by folksinger Bill Bonyun. The guests partook of a light collation that included whale meat hors d'oeuvres.

The 1963 National Library Week was run at a more subdued pace than its predecessor. The Librarian spoke to the Old Dartmouth Historical Society expressing his belief that a unified whaling research library, encompassing the collections of both the Old Dartmouth and the Library, would be a major step forward for both institutions as well as the City. Culminating that week was the appearance of Arthur Lewis, author of "The Day They Shook the Plum Tree". This book had detailed the story

of Hetty Green's two children, Edward and Sylvia Ann. Well over 600 persons attended the author's talk at the Keith Junior High School.

The 1964 and 1965 National Library Week passed with comparative quietude. National Library Week in 1964 featured the unveiling of the partially restored art collection with Mr. Bartlett Hayes as guest speaker. NLW 1965 was spent in readying for library automation and the planning and the execution of the renovation of the central library.

## LIBRARIAN'S ACTIVITIES

On a professional level, the Librarian was busy in several activities. He served as a member of the Education Committee of the Massachusetts Library Association, as well as a representative from the Old Dartmouth Library Club to the Executive Committee of the M. L. A. I served, too, as Chairman of the Constitution Committee of the Public Library Administrators Section of the New England Library Association. Further, he is presently serving a second term as a member of the Subscription Books Committee of the American Library Association, and served with Miss Rita A. Steele, Librarian of the Millicent Library in Fairhaven, as a Co-Chairman of the Southeastern Regional Library Council, until that group was merged into the larger, Eastern Regional Library Advisory Council. Within that larger body, the Librarian served as Vice-Chairman for three years. Also, within that group, the Librarian served as Chairman of the Budget Sub-Committee.

Within the City, the Librarian was appointed Chairman of the Committee to re-vitalize the library of the Bristol County House of Correction by Sheriff Edward K. Dabrowski. Sheriff Dabrowski has done many fine things since he began his term, and the interest he has shown in the prison library is most significant.

In other areas, I have served as a member of WHALE, the New Bedford Summer Festival Committee, Greater New Bedford's Day at the World's Fair (and as co-chairman of the Activities Committee), and the Kennedy Memorial Committee. Further, he has addressed a large number of organizations, bringing the name of the Library to the community.

## THE REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

No department in the Library plays a more varied or important role than the Reference Department. It is through this department that a library is all things to all people. The questions asked in this department are of an immense variety. People from all walks of life, students and scholars, tradespeople and bankers, housewives and career women use the library in their desire to find out one fact or a thousand. One person wants

to clarify the meaning of a word. Another is doing major research on a special project. Each must come first to the Reference Department.

Not only as a educational facility does the Rerefence Department function but as a reflector of society today. It sets up a multiplicity of displays for the various activities that are taking place in New Bedford. It acts as a community clearing house for dates for the great number of groups and organizations planning programs. No brief report can possibly do justice to the kaleidoscopic services of a reference department. If one wants to know, one has but to call and ask.

## GENEALOGICAL DEPARTMENT

The City of New Bedford is fortunate to have one of the outstanding genealogical collections in the Commonwealth. Persons come from all over New England and the Northeast to personally use the collection. In addition, written requests come into the Department from all over the nation. This is understandable when one realizes that within the collection are materials that can only be found in a very few libraries in this country.

In 1962, the Genealogical Room was moved from its quarters in what is now the Melville Whaling Room. Lodged now in what used to be the Art Room, the collection will soon be removed to the Elizabeth Rotch Rodman House.

## EXTENSION FACILITIES

The various extension services include the three branches and the book-mobile. Each of these facilities is the public library, but with difference. The branches are neighborhood libraries. They are local centers of library service and must do for their publics all that is done in the Central Library. Within each of these separate facilities, people find a wealth of reading, research and educational materials. In addition, the branches serve as neighborhood cultural centers. Both the Wilks and Lawler Branches have had a great deal and variety of use made of their auditoriums. Art exhibits, lectures, organization meetings, and the like bring thousands of persons a year into the Library. Many of these persons probably never make use of the Library in any other manner, and their presence in the various auditoriums at least shows them how their tax dollars are being spent. And each year, as their circulation grows, and the number of their users grow, the Branches are called upon to give ever-increasing service. One age group alone — young people — constitutes as much as seventy percent of the work in the Branches. It is a sad commentary on our culture that our young people have become a

## NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARIES



"LIBRARY ON WHEELS,"  
SERVICE BEGAN  
IN 1954.

FRANCIS J. LAWLER BRANCH LIBRARY  
OPENED MARCH, 1960.



WILKS BRANCH LIBRARY  
OPENED MARCH, 1958.

HOWLAND-GREEN  
BRANCH LIBRARY  
OPENED MAY, 1964.



burden to the institutions that serve them. Yet, while we struggle to maintain order and discipline and attempt to limit the theft and mutilation of materials, we still work to give the large number of young and old the kind of library service they need and want. The service extended by the Branch libraries is a tribute to those who staff those facilities.

The Bookmobile is still another example of library service. The service provided by a bookmobile is limited, at best. Particularly useful when making stops at schools, the bookmobile is designed to give only a limited form of library service to those who live too far from the Central Library or the Branches. The Bookmobile staff is able to keep up with a fast growing pace. Yet, since we are limited to only one such vehicle, too many are still not served. It is to be hoped that a second and larger vehicle can be soon put to work.

## SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

No library picture is more well-known than that of a child looking over the row upon row of books in the Children's Room. That picture has been seen in this library a great many times. But, that picture does not portray any of the vast amount of work and other projects of the staff of the Children's Department. The many book talks to Church, School and Scout groups, the tours and instructions in the use of libraries for a great many grade school children, the Honor Society and its special privileges, the assistance rendered to teachers in selecting materials for their classes — these and many more are the types of service offered above and beyond the collections for the reference service to the children. Of particular interest in 1962, was the request by Radio Station WNBH to include book reviews for teen-agers in its program TRIPLE TEENS. The above, briefly, shows some of the activities in the Library's most popular department.

In addition to the work in the Juvenile Department itself, the members of that Department carried on a vast school deposit program. Each September, several tens of thousands of books were boxed and sent to the schools within the City. The books were kept in the various classrooms, for use by the children. The following Spring, the books were returned. The circulation of these books reached more than 125,000 in 1963. In the Fall of 1964, after a conference with Dr. James Hayden, Supt. of Schools, it was decided that the school room deposits were inadequate to the task of properly serving the school children. Thus, during 1965, 26 school libraries were started with books from the Free Public Library. Miss Charlotte S. Nye was in charge of this operation.

## CATALOG DEPARTMENT

The Catalog Department has worked through many difficulties and experienced a series of ups and downs.

At the end of 1960, the Library was listed as containing a collection of 309,599 volumes. In 1961, 14,285 volumes were purchased and 75 volumes were received as gifts. In the same year however, 7,309 volumes were discarded, leaving an overall total of 316,575 volumes. 1962 showed a marked loss. 13,190 volumes added by purchase; 82 added by gift for a total of 13,272. The discarding program, showing its very definite influence, weeded out 20,574, leaving a net loss and a total of 309,618. 1963 showed an even more significant drop. This was the year of the inventory. Books added by purchase, 9,704, by gift, 69 for a total of 9,773. Books withdrawn 24,035 — including 12,913 volumes missing in inventory.

Thus, at the end of 1963, the Library had its first accurate account of volumes owned and that total showed a figure of 295,356 volumes. The Library's collection increased to 307,297 volumes at the end of 1964, with 15,525 volumes added, and 3,584 volumes discarded. 1965 saw the relocation of the Catalog Department to the top floor, and its rearrangement to facilitate the processing of library material. In addition, the coding of the 15,000 fiction titles took more time from the regular duties of the department. The training of 15 Neighborhood Youth Corps workers in what is normally a bastion of library professionalism was a major accomplishment. With the help of these people, the massive rejecting from the Main Catalog was also accomplished. And for the last five months of 1965, the department was involved with changing procedures to merge with I. B. M. system. Despite the many other calls upon their time and effort, the personnel in the department managed to catalog 14,216 items while our discarding program was still in operation, with 25,032 volumes being dropped from the Library's collection. Thus, at the start of 1966, the Library counted its book collection at 296,481 volumes.

## PERSONNEL

The staff of your library has had a busy time in the past five years. From the beginning, they have given their whole hearted support to our programs. Without them, our hopes would have never come to fruition. We have gained some new members, some have been promoted, and others have left us. Miss Evelyn Constantine was promoted from Administrative Assistant to Assistant Librarian. Mrs. Cecelia Weaver

was appointed Head of Circulation Department. Mr. Reginald B. Hegarty was promoted from Bookmobile Driver to Curator of the Melville Whaling Room. Mrs. Frances B. Sanderson was made Chief Cataloger, Miss Thelma Paine was promoted to Chief Reference Librarian, and Miss Judith Stonehill was made Data Processing Librarian.

Appointed to the staff were:

Mrs. Kathleen Sherman	Mrs. Wanda Bourgeois
Mrs. Marilyn Caton	Mrs. Ruth Rego
Mrs. Nina Regis	Miss Suzanne Lemay
Miss Judith Stonehill	Mr. Gerard Gagnon
Mrs. Mary Manning	Mrs. Sophie DeViveiros
Miss Margaret Normile	Mrs. Mary M. Boudreau
Mrs. Germaine Surprenant	Miss Carolyn Mendes
Miss Gail Beattie	Mrs. Ida Abreu

Resignations and retirements from the staff included:

Mrs. Hilda Moniz	Mr. and Mrs. William Marsh
Mr. Adrien Landry	Mrs. Doris Bower
Mrs. Mary Correia	Miss Suzanne Lemay
Miss Gertrude Goldstein	Mrs. Celestine Powers
Miss Marion Bonner	Mrs. Deolinda Tavares, deceased

The work that has been done in the years encompassed in this report has not been done by one man. My sincere appreciation is extended to the Board of Library Trustees and to my staff. A special word of thanks is due to my Assistant Librarian, Miss Evelyn Constantine for her unstinting professional and personal loyalty.



# STAFF OF THE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

JAMES S. HEALEY, City Librarian

GAIL E. HALLIWELL, Secretary to the Librarian

## *Catalog Department*

Miss Pauline Bolduc  
Chief of Technical Processes  
Mrs. Frances Sanderson,  
Chief Cataloger  
Mrs. Alice Mahoney  
Mrs. Bernice Williams  
Mrs. Natalie Goodwin  
Miss Marilyn Tavano

## *Data Processing Department*

Miss Judith Stonehill  
Data Processing Librarian  
Mrs. Kathleen Sherman  
Mrs. Margaret Fanning

## *Reference Department*

Miss Thelma Paine  
Acting Chief of Reference  
Services  
Mrs. Johanna Walsh  
Miss Yvette Boisclair  
Miss Shirley Cohen

## *Circulation Department*

Mrs. Cecilia Weaver  
Circulation Librarian  
Miss Margaret Normile  
Miss Sally Victoria  
Miss Carolyn Mendes  
Mrs. Esther Taber

## *Genealogy Department*

Miss Loretta Phaneuf  
Genealogy Librarian

## *Janitorial Department*

Mr. Gabriel Souza  
Senior Building Custodian  
Mr. Gerard Gagnon  
Mr. Frank Lawrence  
Mrs. Ida Abreu  
Mrs. Rose D. P. Alves  
Mrs. Sophie DeViveiros  
Mr. Mitchell A. Wojtkunski  
Wilks Branch  
Mr. Alfred Tavares  
Howland-Green Branch  
Mr. Leonard Rose  
Lawler Branch

## *Melville Whaling Room*

Mr. Reginald B. Hegarty  
Curator

## *Children's Room*

Miss Charlotte Nye  
Chief of Work with Children  
and Young People  
Mrs. Maude Johnson  
Mrs. Mary M. Boudreau

## *Branches and Bookmobile* *Francis J. Lawler Branch*

Miss Lucy A. Sherman  
Branch Librarian  
Mrs. Gertrude Lapointe  
Mrs. Nina Regis  
Mrs. Marilyn Caton

## *Wilks Branch*

Miss Jeanie Shields  
Branch Librarian  
Mrs. Mary Manning  
Mrs. Germaine Surprenant  
Mrs. Mary Lynch

## *Howland-Green Branch*

Miss Cezaltina Mendoza  
Branch Librarian  
Mrs. Janice Davidian  
Miss Mary Phaneuf  
Mrs. Irva Torres

## *Bookmobile*

Mrs. Catherine Bell  
Bookmobile Librarian  
Mrs. Sylvia Mitchell  
Mr. Maurice Cote  
Bookmobile Driver

## *Pages and Substitutes*

Miss Anita Lebeau  
Substitute  
Miss Donna Ledvina  
Page  
Miss Nancy Harris  
Page

Our work here has been aided by many "good friends and true" outside of the Library. While far from a complete list, those named below have worked hard and long, devoted time, energy and money to the cause of better library service for the people of New Bedford.

For their varied and extensive contributions to the organization and development of the Melville Whaling Room.

M. V. Brewington, Assistant Director, Peabody Institute, Salem, Massachusetts.  
Edouard A. Stackpole, Executive Director of the Nantucket Chamber of Commerce.

Harold M. Burstein, dealer in rare and unique books, Waltham, Massachusetts.

Mrs. Henry P. Kendall, Sharon, Massachusetts.

The Henry P. Kendall Foundation, Sharon, Massachusetts.

The Coe Foundation, New York, New York.

The New Bedford Port Society.

For their varied and extensive contributions to the Restoration and maintenance of the Library's collection of works by New Bedford artists, the restoration of the Rotch Rodman House, the Restoration Ball.

Mr. S. Morton Vose, Vose Galleries, Boston, Massachusetts.

Mrs. John M. Bullard, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Mr. David L. Smith, Director, Swain School of Art, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Mrs. William K. Russell, Nonquit, Massachusetts.

Mrs. Paul A. Schmid, Westport, Massachusetts.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Alfred DesChenes, Dartmouth, Massachusetts.

Mr. and Mrs. Eliot S. Knowles, Dartmouth, Massachusetts.

Mr. H. G. Crowell, Mattapoisett, Massachusetts.

Mr. and Mrs. John DeMello, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

For their varied and extensive contributions to the physical restoration of the Free Public Library.

Mr. John Chadwick, Chief of the Building Department, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Mr. Walter Mont, Chief of the Wire Department, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Mr. Robert E. Stewart, City Planner, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

The New Bedford Standard-Times for its unstinting support of the Library's varied programs.

Atty. Joseph C. Duggan, Mrs. Gladys Reynolds SaVoie, and John H. Ackerman, the Library's most grateful thanks for their encouragement and assistance in innumerable ways.

To all of these people, we offer our thanks.

# Salt Spray and Sperm Whales

by James S. Healey

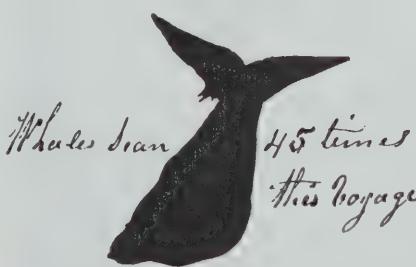
National Library Week has been the occasion for bond drives, dedication and open house ceremonies, authors' teas, and governors' proclamations. Unique, perhaps, among its annals is this opening of the Melville Whaling Room in the New Bedford (Massachusetts) Free Public Library, which took place during last year's NLW. The particular ingredients for its success are not easy to find, for just how many libraries own the only log book which recounts the capture of a white whale? But by setting a national observance within the framework of local interest, New Bedford's situation has implications for libraries everywhere. The impact of the new facility made April 8-14 not only National Library Week but also Whaling Week in New Bedford. "The library," writes the author, "pushed every aspect of the city's heritage," and the city responded, even to the special on the menu of the New Bedford Hotel: whale meat steak.

OF ALL THE CITIES OF AMERICA, few have had so colorful or so important a place in the nation's history as the city of New Bedford, Massachusetts. Once the whaling capital of the world, New Bedford ranked with Boston and New York as a center of commerce. From 1840 to 1870, when the industry was at its height, the whaling business brought in an average of three million dollars a year.

One of the questions that helped start the Revolution was who could whale and where. The three ships that were relieved of their tea cargoes in Boston Harbor were whale ships that had sold their oil and bone in England and brought back tea. Many of the Pacific Islands were discovered by whalers and charted in their log books. In 1942, the Navy Department sent men to New Bedford to examine these logs. It was said that but for a hundred years' growth of trees and foliage, the charts were exact.

The money brought into New Bedford by the sale of oil and bone went out across the building nation in the form of industrial growth, new discoveries, and great speculative fortunes. Hetty Green, "the Witch of Wall Street," came from a whaling family. Few were the aspects of American industry between 1820 and 1880 that did not have whaling money behind them.

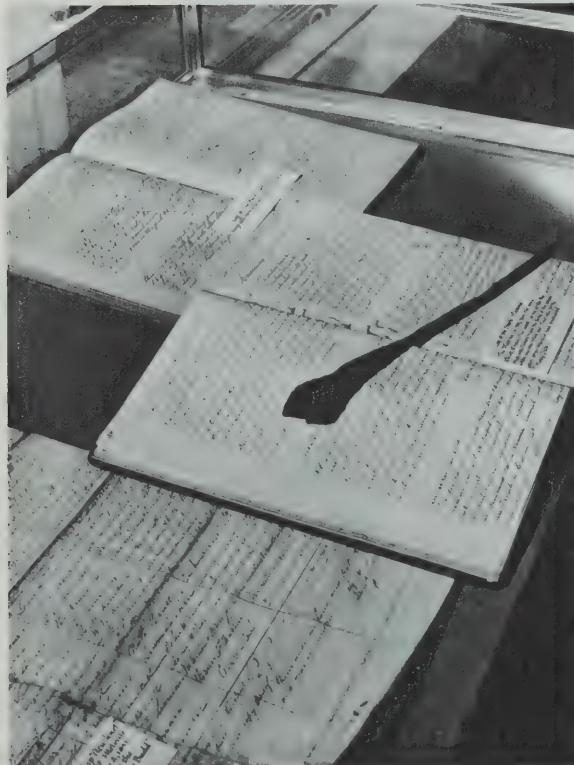
Coming to New Bedford in 1961, I found that the library had little to remind the people of New Bedford of their history and heritage. Lee Ash's *Subject Collections* (Bowker, 2d ed. 1961) showed the library as having some 2,000 whaling items. Searching them out, it was found that they were scattered throughout the library in storerooms, closets, stacks. The collection was not housed in any particular order, in any given place, and little provision had been made for its preservation. As a result, scholars and researchers, as well as the general public, rarely thought about using the material. No one outside of the library knew precisely what the library held. Inside the library only one person had any idea of what might be there. And he had been overlooked.



Reprinted from March 1963 *Wilson Library Bulletin* by courtesy of the H. W. Wilson Co., New York City

This hidden asset was the bookmobile driver. Son of a whaling captain, he had spent eight of his first twelve years on whaling voyages, and after forty years of study, research and writing, had the equivalent of a Ph.D. in the subject. For a few months, when time allowed, we talked about whaling. His repertory of tales was inexhaustible. Gradually, the talk turned to what the library had in its collection—what types of materials, where were they located, were the materials good for anything? The answers were quite surprising. The materials covered every aspect of the whaling industry—log books, account books, crew lists, seaman's bonds and insurance policies—and they could be found almost anywhere in the building.

What good were they? More than most people realized. As it happens, there is a great and growing interest in whaling. At one time, you could buy a log book for five dollars. Today, a good log will cost thirty or forty times that amount. And since the film "Moby Dick" appeared, the interest has increased tremendously. People all over the country are interested in whaling. As far away as Australia and New Zealand, collectors are working diligently to build their collections.



It became obvious, finally, that we had an obligation to do something about the scattered collection. As our whaling expert intensified his search, our collection's estimated size climbed from two to eight to twelve thousand pieces. It was decided then that New Bedford would get a whaling room.

This decision was easily arrived at, but less easily executed. First, we had to determine where the room would be located. The only area large enough was the Genealogy Room, and a survey proved that the genealogy collection could be moved into four smaller rooms situated nearby. With this much settled, the news was announced to the paper.

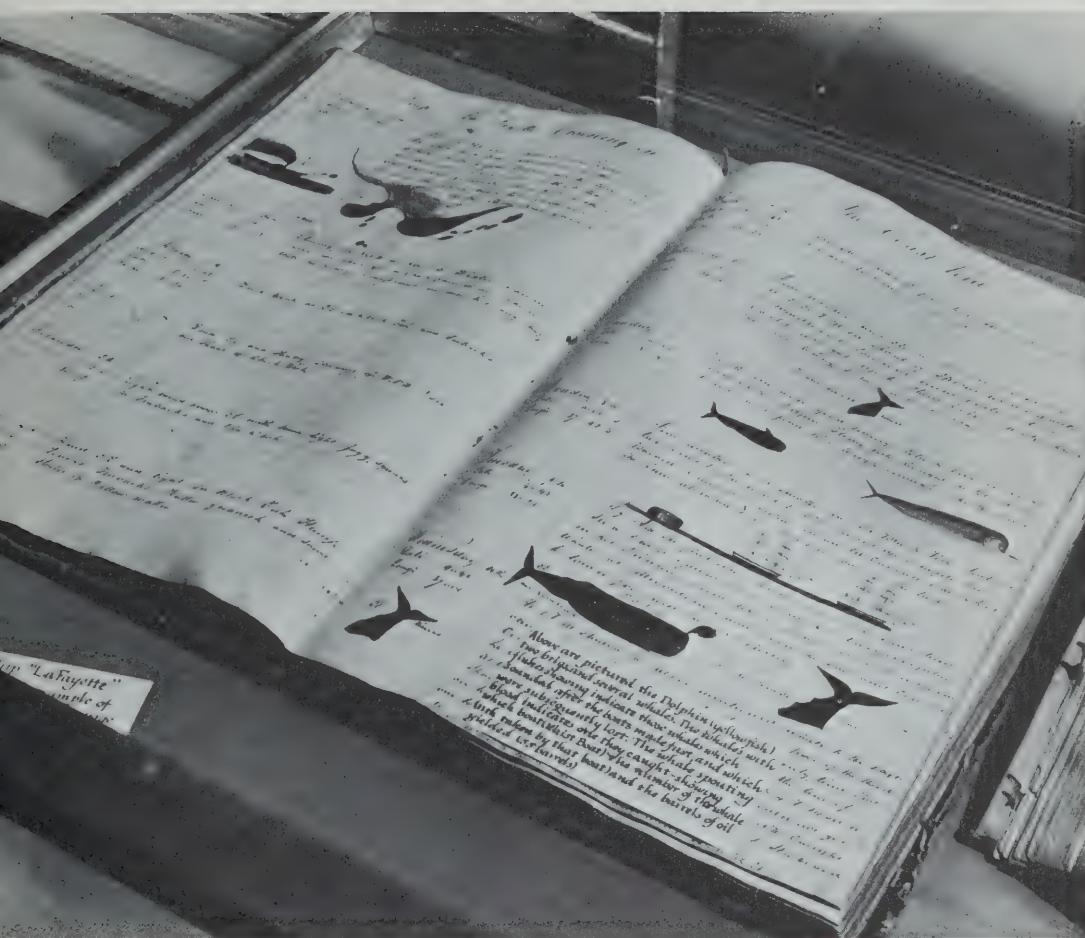
And as if the heavens had opened, a small, hard core of genealogists sent up a terrible howl. Although we had made it very clear that the collection was going to be moved, not discarded, the genealogists refused to believe it. The comments ranged from the bitter to the ridiculous: from "If you change the room, you will be sorry" to "You shouldn't destroy the fine genealogy collection. I use it all the time." The plans went on—the Genealogy Room was moved—and the small but fierce storm ended.

The establishment of the Whaling Room began in earnest. Cases to display and preserve log books and other special materials had to be designed and built. The library's marine art collection had to be appraised. The manuscript and printed material had to be brought into the room. And, since the scheduled date of opening was set for April 14, 1962, the last day of National Library Week, a week of programs had to be planned.

Somehow it was all done. M. V. Brewington, assistant curator of the Peabody Institute in Salem, Massachusetts, and one of the nation's leading experts on marine art, came to New Bedford to appraise our paintings and prints, and to help select the ones we would hang in the room. Stuart Sherman, director of the Providence Public Library and curator of the Nicholson Whaling Collection at that library, and Edouard Stackpole, curator of the

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*In the lower left-hand corner is the outbound crew list of the ship "Acushnet" on which Herman Melville sailed. At center is a log of the bark "Platina," which recounts the only taking of a white whale; lying across the log is a lance which was removed from that whale. In the upper left-hand corner is a log of the bark "Kathleen" that was rammed and sunk by a whale.*



Log of the ship "Lafayette," a good example of an illustrated log book. In the upper left-hand corner is a chart of an island, indicating an offshore current. The right-hand page shows several whales, ships, and porpoises that were sighted during the voyage. The whale spouting blood in the lower left center of this page represents one that was taken by the ship.

Mystic Marine Museum, both offered suggestions and ideas for the room. A quiet appeal for funds brought in almost a thousand dollars to help pay for cases and other needs. Four ship models and some fifty manuscripts were received on permanent loan. By opening day, the number of assembled items had grown to over twenty thousand—a collection second only, we believe, to that of the National Archives in Washington.

Finally, National Library Week came, with three speakers telling of various phases of whaling and the whaling industry. With the mayor's proclamation that April 8-14 was to be observed as National Library Week and Whaling Week in New Bedford, the library pushed every aspect of the city's heritage. (And for an extra special attraction, the New Bedford Hotel offered a whale meat steak special.)

On April 14 then, with appropriate festivities, the Melville Whaling Room was opened to the public. The name was not chosen at random. In what is called the Melville Case are several objects that deal with the author of *Moby Dick*. One such piece is the outbound-crew list of the ship "Acushnet."\* Melville's name (not an autograph) appears on this crew list. Of even more interest is a small piece of paper, signed by a consular official in the Pacific stating that "... Herman Melville . . . jumped ship on the Island of Nukaheva." It was on the "Acushnet" that Melville learned the whaling trade. And it was on the island of Nukaheva that he met the tribe of natives called "Typee," meaning

\* A crew list is simply a listing of every man aboard ship, with the name of the agent that signed him on, and the amount of the man's share of the voyage's profits.



*An interested visitor at the opening of the Melville Whaling Room inspects model of the whaling bark "Sunbeam." In background can be seen some of the cases which contain the library's more than 500 log books.*

maneaters. In the case is a copy of a first edition of *Moby Dick*, bound in porpoise skin. Of two log books in the case, the first is of the bark "Kathleen," one of several whaling vessels that were rammed and sunk by a whale. The second log is that of the bark "Platina" which, in 1902, took the only white whale ever captured. Atop the log is a part of a lance that was found in the whale, thus suggesting interesting comparisons between fact and fancy.

Another piece of particular interest is the log of the ship "Junior," on which occurred one of the most famous mutinies in maritime history. After the mutiny occurred, the mutineers wrote the whole story out—telling who was involved and who was innocent. In the art collection, several originals hang on the walls, two by the well-known Benjamin Russell, and a primitive whaling painting done by some unknown artist between 1840 and 1850. This piece was found in one of the library's attics and restored. Also in the room

is a case in which most of the plates from the first volume of Audubon's Elephant Folio edition of the *Birds of America* are stored. Given to the library by the wealthy whaling merchant James Arnold, the set is one of ninety-six complete sets traced out of the original 175, and the New Bedford Library is one of the nine public libraries in the United States and Canada that boasts of one or more sets. The plates have been carefully detached from the binding and mounted in a specially designed arrangement. Those plates not stored in the case are hanging in various places in the library.

This is all past. Now begins the long, hard but most important work of all—the cataloging, indexing and restoration of the great amounts of material in the Room. Another aspect of the library's project is an oral history program that is now being planned. When this work is completed, the balladeers may truly sing again, "They send you to New Bedford, that famous whaling port . . ."

# *Onboard in New Bedford*

by James S. Healey

Librarian, Free Public Library  
New Bedford, Mass.

The War on Poverty has made its impact in New Bedford, Massachusetts, as it has across the nation. Neighborhood Youth Corps, Operation Head Start, Job Corps, Neighborhood Councils—these are words heard across the land, mystifying the citizenry, and costing many millions. Although the New Bedford library is involved in many phases of the antipoverty program, by acting as a meeting place for Operation Head Start groups, as a center for a neighborhood council, and as a resource center for other activities, the library still attempted to make great use of the Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC) for our needs. By using this program, we believed that we would be doing a fuller and more complete job in the active campaign against economic disadvantage.

The Neighborhood Youth Corps (the Work-Training Program), established under Title I-B of EOA, is administered, federally, by the U.S. Department of Labor. In running the program, the Department of Labor serves as a delegated agency of the Office of Economic Opportunity. Locally, until the end of the summer program, the program was directed by the City of New Bedford. With the fall program, direction of the project is being transferred to the local War on Poverty Office known as *Onboard*. Financing from federal and local funds is done on a 90-10 basis: the federal government provides funds for paying the NYC recruits at the rate of \$1.25 per hour, as well as some items of equipment; the local agency must provide ten percent of the funds, for supervisory time, materials, supplies, and equipment.

Selection of applicants for the NYC is made on the basis of need. The local office of the State Division of Employment Security refers the dropouts and the in-school students to the NYC project director who then places the young people with the city departments and other non-profit agencies. (In the initial program, the li-

brary had no choice in selecting recruits. For the summer and fall programs we were able to request certain individuals to be returned to the library if they continued to be eligible.)

Our first experience came early in 1965. Officials from the NYC came to inquire: "How many people could we use, and in what capacities?" Having had no experience with a program that offered as many people as could be used, we found it difficult to estimate need. Finally, we decided to request 30 youngsters. Half of these were high school dropouts, nine boys and six girls, who worked 30 hours a week; the other half were girls, still enrolled in high school, who could work only 13 hours per week. The two groups were then assigned; the dropouts went into the custodial department and the other group went to work as library pages. And then the difficulties began: the young people knew nothing about working; they had never worked before. Getting them to work on time and keeping them at the job were but a few of the problems. Theft was another. Things began to be missed, such as a drafting tool or a sweater. We began to weed out the less desirable employees. The very troublesome ones were given days off, a week layoff in some cases. When that proved ineffective, they were cut from the payroll. Gradually, as the troublemakers were sent back to the NYC office, the thefts stopped and more work got done. We continually emphasized that the workers involved in the project were employed for the good of the library and themselves, and eventually this became meaningful to them.

Finally, a group of eight solid workers remained. As the boys and girls demonstrated more responsibility, supervision was relaxed. Now they are given directions once, and go right to work, and the custodians rarely have to remain with the employees to make sure of what's being done and how it is being accomplished. Those who worked in the stacks seemed to have fewer problems. The custodial crew was put to work painting the interior of the central building. Since the walls had not been painted in nearly ten years, this made quite an impact. Another project involved the rearrangement of departments, for the library is undergoing a com-

plete departmental reorganization. A young adult department is being opened in the fall in what used to be the library's cataloging department. A group of male recruits moved the materials to a new location two floors above. Then they ripped the old shelving from the walls and completed the project by removing a worn floor. These boys also have been employed to clean up the grounds, trim hedges, and edge walks. They have moved books in the stacks, helped hang art exhibits, and have worked to freshen up, clean up, and renew an architectural masterpiece that had begun to look shabby.

That was the beginning; our second experience came in April. The NYC staff came back and said, "What about the summer? Think big!" We did, to the amount of 112 people. Of that number, 95 were placed in the central building and the remaining staff, in branch libraries. The supervision of more than 100 high school students is no small problem, but the young people made, nevertheless, a sizable contribution.

In the Reference Department six girls arranged the government documents in order for the first time in nearly 25 years. Finishing that, they weeded the vertical file for obsolete materials. Thirteen boys and girls placed new pockets and book cards in the fiction collections. With the library's circulation being automated by a data processing installation, new pockets and cards are a necessity.

Fifteen girls prepared 18 school library collections. New Bedford's elementary schools are bereft of libraries except for three located in brand new buildings and these do not have any collections to speak of, and no personnel. The public library has stepped into the breach to give some semblance of school library service by processing and preparing several thousands of books for the use of schools. Seven young men (the same employed in the earlier program) worked with the Custodial Department. Three girls in the Genealogy Department indexed a newly acquired group of papers from an historically prominent New Bedford family, and four boys acted as security for an important art exhibition during the summer.

The *pièce de résistance*, however, involved the Melville Whaling Room. A group of 36 girls

indexed, typed, and transcribed from microfilm, information on the subject of American whaling. The New Bedford Library has nearly 6,700 whaling crew lists, the contracts the whalers made when they signed on board. Each of these crew lists averages about 30 names. Thus, there are approximately 201,000 names to index. In addition to the names, other information to be added included the man's age, birthplace, description, ship name, ship type, place where ship was registered, dates sailed and returned, the man's position, the man's lay (share of the voyage), and the source where the information was found. On the average, ten items could be found for each man. Comprised in the total are almost 2,000,000 pieces of information that eventually will be obtained from one part of one department's project.

The fall program presently awaits funding. We have requested a total of 45 workers: 35 part-time girls, four part-time boys, four male dropouts, and two female dropouts. These young people will carry on the work commenced this summer. For example, 11 girls will be in the Melville Room working on the index project. Others will be placed in the catalog, juvenile,



*At work on the whaling crew lists.*

reference and janitorial departments. One of our most interesting fall programs will involve our recently installed data processing system, the first in a New England public library. During our spring and summer projects, we learned that one of our dropouts was a trained key-punch operator who could not get a job because of lack of experience. Her pertinent experience, however, aided us in moving along our installation much faster. This fall, we will send two of our students to be trained as key-punchers so that they can be used in our data processing department.

Looking further into the future, we are planning to continue this type of program as long as there are funds available. Naturally, there is a counseling program for all of the NYC personnel. Each employee is assigned to a qualified guidance person. The more troublesome or difficult cases are referred to agencies in the community. As the program continues, *Onboard* will establish its own psychological counseling operation. Within the library, a great deal of informal guidance has been going on, and we have had some success.

Three from our original dropout work group will reenter school in September; two more have

obtained steady jobs. From our summer crew, those engaged in typing are obtaining eight weeks of hard-to-come-by experience and they are told and shown just how important the work is which they are doing. Now that the summer program has ended, we are requesting several merchants in the city to place a few of our best recruits. Staff members, at first uncertain of what to do, are working individually with some of the young people to show them the importance of schooling and good work habits.

In summary, the NYC workers in this library have vindicated themselves and proved the worth of the NYC program. Unquestionably, this whole project was, and remains, no easy task. Bringing in a massive group of untrained workers for employment in sensitive areas presents problems, but, with supervision and some basic training, these people can be a very definite asset to any library. Some of the benefits are obvious; the young people receive good on-the-job-training and the library accomplishes a great deal of work. And, most importantly from any library's point of view, the NYC provides an excellent way to acquaint large numbers of young people with a library and what a library does.

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